

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

021114Z Feb 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	DOE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/009W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8165
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000628

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/10

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [ZI](#) [MDC](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: RULING PARTY PUTS OUT A FEELER TO THE
OPPOSITION

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CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) SENIOR ADVISOR CLIVE PUZEY (PROTECT) INFORMED POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF ON FEBRUARY 2 THAT OVER THE JANUARY 27-28 WEEKEND, GOODSON NGUNI, REPORTEDLY A RELATIVE OF SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AND SENIOR ZANU-PF POLITBURO MEMBER EMMERSON MNANGAGWA, INVITED THE OPPOSITION PARTY TO ENTER FORTHWITH INTO A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. ONLY PUZEY AND NGUNI WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING, BUT PUZEY LATER BRIEFED MDC PRESIDENT MORGAN TSVANGIRAI AND TWO OTHER SENIOR OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISCUSSION. ZANU-PF WAS PREPARED TO OFFER THE MDC 40 PERCENT OF CABINET POSITIONS PLUS A VICE PRESIDENCY, ACCORDING TO PUZEY. IN EXCHANGE, THE ZANU-PF OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY WANTED THE MDC'S AGREEMENT NEITHER TO HOLD A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2002 NOR PROSECUTE SENIOR ZANU-PF MEMBERS FOR PAST MISDEEDS. PUZEY LISTENED, MADE NO COMMITMENTS AND SUBSEQUENTLY, WITH TSVANGIRAI'S BLESSING, AGREED TO CONTINUE LOW PROFILE MEETINGS OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE, PERHAPS IN LUSAKA.

12. (C) THE MDC'S THINKING ON THE OFFER WAS STILL INCHOATE BUT THE PARTY HAS NOT DISMISSED IT OUT OF HAND, PUZEY ALLOWED. HE SAID THE OPPOSITION PARTY WOULD INSIST ON HEADING THE ECONOMIC POLICY MINISTRIES AND HOME AFFAIRS, AND ON THEIR CABINET MINISTERS BEING ABLE TO SPEAK FREELY. THE VICE PRESIDENCY IS OUT, HE STATED, AS IT WOULD TIE UP A SENIOR MDC FIGURE IN A POWERLESS IF

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PRESTIGIOUS POST, AND THE MDC LIKELY WOULD INSIST ON GOING AHEAD WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2002. PUZEY CLAIMED THAT FIVE ZANU-PF MINISTERS, INCLUDING SIMBA MAKONI AND NKOSANA MOYO, WERE FED UP AND "ARE ON BOARD WITH US." THE MDC LEADERSHIP IS ALSO CONCERNED THAT IT WILL BE UNABLE TO CONTAIN A WAVE OF VIOLENCE THAT ITS ANGRY MEMBERS MIGHT START SPONTANEOUSLY, POSSIBLY LEADING TO A DE FACTO CIVIL WAR. MOREOVER, OUR INTERLOCUTOR SAID, EVEN IF THE MDC WINS THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, ZANU-PF WOULD NOT ALLOW THE PARTY TO ASSUME POWER. INSTEAD, PRESIDENT MUGABE ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD DECLARE MARTIAL LAW AND RULE BY DECREE.

13. (C) COMMENT: PUZEY HAD NO GOOD ANSWER AS TO WHY ZANU-PF IS SENDING OUT SUCH A FEELER, ALTHOUGH WE FIND THE OFFER A CREDIBLE ONE. IN OUR OPINION, THE RULING PARTY IS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE UNDER-PERFORMING ECONOMY, THE LOOMING POOR HARVEST, INCREASING INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION, AND AN OPPOSITION THAT IS REAPING POLITICAL CAPITAL FROM ITS MISHAPS. IT MAKES

SENSE TO TAKE THE BOLD STROKE OF BRINGING THE OPPOSITION INTO THE TENT AND GIVE IT IMPOSSIBLY DIFFICULT PORTFOLIOS AT WHICH IT WOULD FAIL. IN THE MINDS OF ZANU-PF STRATEGISTS, THE ATTACKS IN THE FOREIGN PRESS WOULD THEN CEASE AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY WOULD OPEN ITS PURSE TO FUND LAND REFORM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, MUGABE WOULD REMAIN IN POWER AND HIS CRONIES WOULD ENJOY PROTECTION FROM THE LAW. THE OPPOSITION PARTY THUS WOULD BE CO-OPTED, DISCREDITED OR NEUTRALIZED.

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14. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: AT THE MOMENT IT APPEARS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HOLDS THE GUNS AND THE MDC THE POLITICAL LEGITIMACY HERE. FOLLOWING THIS OFFER, WE IMAGINE THE OPPOSITION FINDS ITSELF ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA. SHOULD IT LEND ITS GOOD NAME TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, OR SHOULD IT FIGHT FOR POWER ON ITS OWN TERMS IN WHAT COULD BE A PYRRHIC VICTORY, GIVEN THE VIOLENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CLEARLY IS PREPARED TO DEPLOY IN SUCH A CONTEST? END COMMENT.

IRVING

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